

UA Wildcat Corps

2013 -2014

Tucson, Arizona

Federal Legislative District(s): 7

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 7th
State Legislative District(s): 27th
Service Area by County/City: Pima/Tucson
Project Federal Share: \$135,582
Project Local Match: \$100,366
Community Volunteers Recruited: 644
Volunteer Hours Served: 6,049
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$121,463.92
*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

Community Need

The plight of residents in rural America is distressing and even more so in Arizona. Tucson is the sixth poorest city in the U.S. Arizona ranks third in child hunger rates. More than one-fourth of our children live in poverty. Arizona's Opportunity Index is 46th among the 50 states. Remote eastern Pinal County in Arizona is considered the Appalachia of the state, for example.

But, the research is clear--young people need caring adults in their lives, access to safe environments during the out-of-school hours, and the opportunities and supports to develop useful skills and participate in civic life. Arizona youth need all of these attributes and more. Young people in rural, marginalized and isolated communities are usually the first to experience a decrease in positive opportunities for skill building that will assist those youth in rising out of poverty or cycles of disenfranchisement. Rural youth often lack access to opportunities to develop mastery of marketable technology skills. Education is a key to improving one's life. Unfortunately, Arizona ranks 43rd in the nation in the percentage of high school graduates who go on to college. Less than half of our public high school graduates qualify academically to enroll in public universities.

National Priority Area and Program Performance Goals

1. Educational Success and Positive Youth Development

Strengthen the capacity of youth to improve educational success through youth development programs. We seek to engage youth in STEM activities, develop life skills, keep young people on the path to graduation, help all youth become college and career ready, and break the cycle of poverty in families by teaching marketable skills, hope, self-determination and optimism.

Goal: At least 2,250 youth will be engaged in hands-on afterschool and out-of-school time programs learning life skills and practical information.

2. Healthy Living

Improve healthy futures, reducing barriers to health care and reducing childhood obesity through nutrition education, physical fitness and active lifestyle choices. Our goal is to involve families and young people in healthy activities to reduce obesity and sedentary lifestyles that can lead to obesity and health problems.

Goal: 250 young people will learn about healthy lifestyles and diets through engaging in afterschool programs.

Program Activities

Twenty-five AmeriCorps members are serving in 15 agencies or organizations in southern Arizona. Youth and adults participate in community gardening programs, parent education, cooking classes, STEM activities, tutoring, mentoring, challenge courses, seed-to-table programs, water education & conservation, physical fitness and healthy lifestyles programs, leadership development, life skills education, economic and financial management programs and community integration programs. Members deliver services that benefit school-age children, refugees, military youth, families and communities. Additional volunteers are recruited and trained to assist with many of these programs, contributing a multiplier effect to AmeriCorps efforts.

AmeriCorps members also participate in community service activities during national days of service and assist with fund development for their projects.

Program Impact

Since our project just started in November 2013, we have just begun to demonstrate programmatic impacts. For example, nearly 800 youth were actively engaged at Pima County Extension's "Harvest Festival" which taught families healthy nutrition, fitness and positive youth development.



UA Wildcat Corps

Mission

The mission of the **University of Arizona** is to improve the prospects and enrich the lives of the people of Arizona and the world through education, research, creative expression, and community and business partnerships.

The mission of **UA Cooperative Extension** is to engage people through applied research and education to improve lives, families, communities, environments and economies in Arizona and beyond.

The mission of the **Graduate College** is to provide central support and leadership to serve, oversee, and advance all aspects of the graduate enterprise at the University of Arizona.



Vision

Through cross-cutting innovations distinctive to the **University of Arizona**, we will expand the student experience through engagement, advance knowledge through innovations in creative inquiry and collaboration, and forge novel partnerships to positively impact our community.

The vision of **UA Cooperative Extension** is to serve as a vital national leader in creating and applying knowledge to help people build thriving, sustainable lives and communities.

The **Graduate College** strives to be one of the best public graduate schools in the nation, educating outstanding students to achieve scholarly excellence in world-class graduate programs.



History

Cooperative Extension celebrates its centennial in 2014. The [Smith-Lever Act of 1914](#) codified into federal law, and provided funding for, outreach endeavors at the Land-Grant Universities founded by the [Morrill Act of 1862](#). The act was introduced by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia and Representative A. F. Lever of South Carolina to expand the vocational,

agricultural and home demonstration programs in rural America.

The appropriation for Cooperative Extension as established by Smith-Lever was unique in that it set up a shared partnership among the Federal, State, and County levels of government. A formula funding mechanism was designed to insure that there was support from each of the levels to help the fledgling system achieve stability and leverage resources.



The funding would flow from Congress to the United States Department of Agriculture and then out to the Land-Grant Universities to be matched with monies from the states and counties receiving programs. Through intentional community development efforts, Extension agents have helped transform rural and urban America by apply research and science to everyday problems.

The unique nature of the Smith-Lever Act brought a systemic process for funding the on-going Extension education work that had been started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by educators such as Seaman A. Knapp, A. B. Graham, Jane McKimmon, and Booker T. Washington.

The ideals exposed by these educators were transformative in the manner in which the Land-Grant Universities saw their role in their state. The move toward a model of cooperative extension education allowed for professional educators to be placed in local communities in order to improve lives, families, communities and the environment by extending research and knowledge to help people solve critical issues and problems that can enhance their well-being.

Today, Cooperative Extension continues to address community needs and issues, and AmeriCorps members are a key element in our work to strengthen Arizona through partnerships.

